



**2016-2017 District Student Handbook**  
**San Benito Consolidated Independent School District**

# San Benito Consolidated Independent School District

John F. Barron Administrative Building 240 N. Crockett Street San Benito, TX 78586

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## Campus Information

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<b>Judge Oscar de la Fuente Elementary</b> <i>Rolando Diaz, Principal</i>	(956) 361-6820	<i>Rolando Guerra, Principal</i>	
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<b>La Paloma Elementary</b> <i>Libby Flores, Principal</i>	(956) 361-6780	<b>Darrel Hester Detention Center</b> <i>Rolando Guerra, Principal</i>	(956) 399-3075
<b>Landrum Elementary</b> <i>Eva Bisailon, Principal</i>	(956) 361-6800	<b>Gateway to Graduation</b> <i>Rolando Guerra, Principal</i>	(956) 361-6446
<b>Rangerville Elementary</b> <i>Diana Atkinson, Principal</i>	(956) 361-6840	<b>Joe Callandret DAEP</b> <b>Postive Redirection Center</b> <i>Ray Saldana, Principal</i>	(956) 361-6275
<b>Sullivan Elementary</b> <i>Stephanie Ramirez, Principal</i>	(956) 361-6880	<b>RGV Youth Recovery Home (Dormitory)</b> <i>Ray Saldana, Principal</i>	(956) 428-5200

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## **ADMISSIONS**

A student seeking enrollment in the District for the first time, or who is transferring in from another school district, must begin the enrollment process at the student's attendance zoned campus. Questions regarding admissions and/or attendance zones are to be directed to the District Coordinator for Parental Engagement and Attendance Services at (956)-361-6310. The office address is located at 355 E. Stenger Street - San Benito, Texas 78586.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Compulsory Attendance**

#### **Notice of House Bill 2398 - Texas School Compulsory Attendance Law**

Effective September 1, 2015, House Bill 2398, passed during the 84<sup>th</sup> legislative session, made numerous sweeping changes to the landscape of truancy laws in the State of Texas. This piece of legislation addresses a school district's responsibility to address student truant conduct, including additional requirements for implementation of truancy prevention measures, and referral of a student to truancy court. Heading into the 2015-2016 school year, school attendance officers, principals, school resource officers, assistant principals, and other pertinent school officials will need to understand the landscape as it now exists in light of House Bill 2398. This overview will highlight the differences in the relevant truancy provisions found in the Texas Education Code.

**Effective in the 2015-2016 school year:**

- **Compulsory attendance:** children ages 6-18 are required to attend school. This bill adds 18 year olds to compulsory attendance requirements. *Texas Education Code §25.0915*
- **Students 19 and older:** a referral to truancy court is prohibited for students attending school after their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.
  - School Districts may issue a warning letter to a student attending school after age 19 and may revoke enrollment for the student if the person has more than (5) unexcused absences in one semester; or as an alternative, impose a behavior improvement plan on the student (see below). A school cannot revoke enrollment of an older student on a day on which the student is physically present at the school.  
*Texas Education Code §25.085; Family Code §65.002*
- **Truant conduct defined:** if a student is absent from school on (10) or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.
  - *Note: Truant conduct eligible for referral to truancy court does not include a student's failure to attend school on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period. Family Code §65.003*
- **Warning Notice:** at the beginning of the school year, a district must send notice to student's parents that if the student is absent on (10) or more days or parts of days within a six month period, the student's parent is subject to prosecution and the student is subject to a truancy court.
- **If a student has been absent without excuse on three days or parts of days within a four-week period, the school district shall issue a warning notice to inform the parent that the student is subject to truancy prevention measures in addition to other statutory requirements in existence.** *Texas Education Code §25.095*
- **Attendance Officer duties:** a licensed officer serving as an attendance officer may no longer take a student into custody even if the parent provides permission or pursuant to the court-ordered legal process
  - *Note: All other duties and powers related to the attendance officer are left intact, including, escorting a student, at the request of a parent, to a school campus to ensure attendance. Texas Education Code §25.091*

### **Truancy Prevention Measures (TPMs)**

- School districts are required to adopt at a minimum the following TPMs:
  - Impose a behavior improvement plan including the specific behavior required or prohibited of the student and the period of time the plan will be in place;
  - Impose school-based community service;
  - Refer the student to counseling, mediation, mentoring, teen court, or other in-school or out-of-school service aimed at addressing the truant behavior. *Texas Education Code §25.0915*
- **Application of TPMs:** a school district must begin application of TPMs if a student fails to attend school without excuse on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.
  - *Note: A school district may apply TPMs to all age students required to attend school under compulsory attendance requirements. Texas Education Code §25.0915 (a-4)*

### **Failure to Attend School**

**HB 2398 has removed Section 25.94 (Failure to Attend School) from the Texas Education Code. This means that a student who is absent from school for (10) or more days or parts of days within a six-month period cannot be referred to court for criminal prosecution of the offense of failure to attend school.**

- **Referral to court for truant conduct:** if a student fails to attend school without excuse on (10) or more days or parts of days within a six-month period, a school district shall refer a student to truancy court within (10) school days of the student's 10<sup>th</sup> absence.

- A district may delay referral to truancy court if the district is applying TPMs and the TPMs are succeeding, or it is not in the best interest of the student to refer the student to truancy court.
- A school district may refer a student ages 12-18 to truancy court.
- A school district is prohibited from referring the following students to truancy court for truant conduct and must provide counseling:
  - Pregnant students
  - Students in foster care program
  - Homeless students
  - Principal income earners for their family
  - *Note: The Texas Office of Courts Administration's Truancy Reform Website Offers additional resources for school administrators implementing HB 2398, including flowcharts for truancy court procedures and school responsibilities, available at: [www.txcourts.gov/publications-training/training-materials/truancy-reform.aspx](http://www.txcourts.gov/publications-training/training-materials/truancy-reform.aspx).*
  - *Texas Education Code §§25.0951, 25.915. Family Code §65.002*
- **Court referral documentation:** referral to truancy court must still be accompanied by a statement from the school certifying that TPMs were applied but failed; and specify whether the student is eligible for or receives special education services.
- Changes to the law have increased the discretion that prosecutors and courts have to dismiss a petition filed by a school district alleging truant conduct for varying reasons, including but not limited to:
  - Does not include information required;
  - Conduct does not satisfy the elements of truant conduct;
  - Not timely filed;
  - Prosecutor's discretion
  - *Texas Education Code §§ 25.0951, 25.0915. Family Code §§ 65.053*

#### Parent Contributing to Non-Attendance

- A school district may still file a complaint for criminal prosecution against a parent. State law has been amended to include that this offense may be punishable by fine only with fines ranging from: \$100 for the first offense to \$500 for fifth or subsequent offenses.
- State law has been amended to require a school district to provide evidence of the parent's "criminal negligence" in contributing to the non-attendance of the student.
  - *Note: Evidence of "Criminal negligence" can include documentation of warning notices, implementation of a behavior improvement contracts signed by a parent and student, and any other information contained by the school district demonstrating an attempt to work with the student's parents.*
  - *Texas Education Code §§25.093, 25.0951, 25.0952*

#### Truancy Prevention Facilitator

- A school district shall employ a truancy prevention facilitator to:
  - Implement TPMs
  - Meet annually with a court case manager to discuss effectiveness of TPMs
  - A school district is allowed to appoint an existing district employee to serve as a truancy prevention facilitator.
  - *Note: School districts have a likely required attendance officers to perform this function in the past.*
  - *Texas Education Code § 25.0915*

#### Truancy Court

- A student between the ages of 12-18 alleged to have missed (10) or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year shall be referred to truancy court for civil processing only.
- A referral of a student for truant conduct shall be to specific courts designed as truancy courts:
- Constitutional county courts (counties with a population of 1.75 million or more); all justice courts; and all municipal courts.
- *Family Code §§ 65.003, 65.004*

#### Expunction of Failure to Attend Records

With the removal of the offense of Failure to Attend School (Texas Education Code § 25.94), House Bill 2398 requires expunction of all records and documents relating to a conviction or complaint of the offense, including any in the possession of a school district. A school district is not required to expunge or destroy any records of this nature until an order from a court has been provided to the school district instructing the district on the process for expunction of records.

# **SAN BENITO CISD STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **Reporting and Documentation Procedures**

All absences must be reported daily to each campus attendance office. Please call or email your notice of absence for your child. If you do not call the campus front office or email the attendance staff, your child will be marked UNEXCUSED for that day.

For any prior day's absences, a written note is required, signed by the parent/guardian. The note must include:

- the student's first and last name (student ID # preferred to be included),
- the reason(s) for the absence(s);
- student's grade level;
- homeroom teacher's name;
- the date(s) the absence(s) occurred;
- and, the parent's contact phone number or email address

## **Five Day Timeframe**

Written notes or doctor's notes are required within (5) five school days of the absence. Five (5) school days are allotted to clear any discrepancies. Those absences without documentation provided after the (5) five school-day period will be considered **UNEXCUSED**.

## **Absences**

When a student is absent from school, the student – upon returning to school – must, within five days, bring a note, signed by the parent, which describes the reason for the absence. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older.

A student absent from school for any reason, other than for a documented health care appointment, will not be allowed to participate in school-related activities on that day or evening. A student who must leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the school nurse. The nurse or campus staff will notify the student's parent should it be determined that the student should be sent home. Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time.

Questions regarding absences in any given academic school year should be addressed before the beginning of the next academic school year. Discrepancies in absences not addressed before the beginning of the next academic school year will not be considered.

## **Doctor's Note Required Status**

When a student has **excessive absences for personal illness** for (3) three or more consecutive days, the student is placed on Doctor's Note Required Status.

- Once a student is on a Doctor Note Required status, a doctor's notes must be submitted.
- If one or more of the absences for personal illness are corrected and the student no longer exceeds consecutive days, the student is released from the obligation of providing a doctor's note for future personal illness absences.
- If the Doctor Note Required Status stands and the student continues to be absent for personal illness without providing a doctor's note, unexcused absences will begin accumulating and will result with an attendance/truancy warning notification letter.

## **Compulsory Attendance/Truancy**

AN ATTENDANCE WARNING LETTER WILL BE SENT TO THE PARENT(S) WHEN A STUDENT HAS 3 OR MORE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES. TRUANCY PREVENTION MEASURES (TPM) WILL ALSO BEGIN, AFTER THE WARNING LETTER HAS BEEN SENT TO THE STUDENT'S PARENT(S).

- (Refer to the 2016-2017 SBCISD Guidelines Truancy Prevention Measures-TPM)

## **Family Vacations**

We encourage parents to plan family vacations during the Thanksgiving week, Christmas/New Year's Holiday break, Spring Break, or summer vacation period. All absences for family vacations, during the school year, will be considered **UNEXCUSED**.

## **Family Emergencies**

If you have a family emergency, please contact the campus office staff. When your child returns to campus, please provide a written note explaining the circumstances. A determination will be made whether or not the absence is excused or unexcused.



## Late Arrivals

Please make sure your child arrives at school on time. The school day begins promptly at:

- Elementary and Middle Schools 7:30 am
- San Benito High School 8:10 am
- Veterans' Memorial Academy 9<sup>th</sup> Grade 8:15 am

## Bus Students – students will never be counted tardy when they ride the bus.

If you choose to drive your child to school, please make allowances for inclement days, road construction, and high volume traffic areas to avoid your child being late or tardy.

When you bring your child to school on the same day after a doctor's appointment, please provide a doctor's note so your child will not be counted as tardy (arriving before 10:00 am) or absent (arriving after 10:00am).

## Early Checkouts

If your child is checked out before 10am, he/she will be absent. Any student that is checked out after 10am will have a partial day absence. Please provide a doctor's note with your child and the partial day absence will be excused.

To clarify, any child that is checked out before school end-of-day hours, and, is not going home ill or to a doctor's appointment, will have an UNEXCUSED partial day absence.

## Excused Absences

Student absences are considered excused for the following reasons:

- Personal illness (includes healthcare visit without documentation) - a parent written note is required;
- Student sent home, by campus nurse, from school and/or any consecutive days. Must be approved by the campus nurse;
- Death of an **immediate** family member (immediate family is defined as parent, guardian, grandparent, sibling of the student or parent, or a person living in the home) – note/documentation required;
- Illness of the **student's child** with note;
- Illness resulting from ongoing medical or psychiatric treatment (chemotherapy, radiation, dialysis, etc. with a doctor's note indicating specific timeframes and anticipated absences);
- Removal by CPS/law enforcement and related days Homeland security and visa appointment (passport/INS/visa/residency; with documentation requiring appearance and proof of attendance);
- Citizenship application appointments and/or participation in a U. S. naturalization oath ceremony (with documentation) including a maximum of one day travel to and one day travel from the site, if applicable (requires all missed assignments to be successfully completed within the timeframe established by the teacher);
- Sounding "Taps" for a military honor funeral held in the state of Texas (for students in grades 6 through 12 and requires all missed assignments to be successfully completed within the timeframe established by the teacher);
- Mandated court appearance with documentation of requirement (subpoena/court order) and attendance including a maximum of one day travel to and one day travel from the site if applicable (requires all missed assignments to be successfully completed within the timeframe established by the teacher);
- Appointment with health care professional such as a doctor, dentist, psychiatrist, or licensed professional psychologist to include:
  - Partial day, or
  - Full day.
- An appointment with a health care professional would include a visit to a doctor or dental office, a speech therapist (SLP), a licensed social worker (LCSW or LMSW), a psychologist (LPA), a licensed professional counselor (LPC), or a professional under the order of a medical doctor; including for a student diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder; an appointment with a health care practitioner to receive generally recognized services such as applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.
- Homebound instruction (CEHI-approved, including PEP students);
- Medicaid-eligible; participating in Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program (with documentation);
- Observance of a religious holy day (full or partial day) of obligation including a maximum of one day travel to and one day travel from the site if applicable (requires all missed assignments to be successfully completed within the timeframe established);
- School-sponsored curricular or extracurricular activity that is NOT UIL related (requires principal approval);
- UIL activity (requires principal approval);
- College/military visit – (with prior approval from campus principal and appropriate verification from visiting institution);
- Activity required by a probation officer (other than court appearances) or Human Services activity required by a caseworker (with documentation; requires all missed assignments to be successfully completed within the timeframe established);
- Election clerk duties (with documentation) including a maximum of one day travel to and one day travel from the site if applicable (requires all missed assignments to be successfully completed within the timeframe established by the teacher).

## Unexcused Absences

If an absence does not meet the criteria for an excused absence or one of the extenuating circumstances specified in Board policy, the absence will be considered unexcused for attendance accounting purposes. **Examples of unexcused student absences include but are not limited to the following reasons:**

- Any absence (including personal illness) without required documentation;
- Failure to bring required doctor's note (after student has been placed on "Doctor's Note Required" for excessive absences for personal illness);
- Non-School-sponsored activity (examples but limited to - sports events, training, and competitions; fine arts events, training, and competitions; chess events, trainings, and competitions);
- Family illness (non-emergency);
- Death/Funeral Service other than immediate family (immediate family is defined as parent, guardian, grandparent, sibling of the student or parent, or a person living in the home) – note/documentation required;
- Out-of-school suspension for disciplinary reason [including an arrest or incarceration for school-related matters for up to three (3) days];
- Family trip/vacation;
- Public Assistance Services/Welfare and WIC appointments;
- College visit without prior approval or appropriate verification);
- Homeland security and visa appointment (passport/INS/visa/residency; without documentation required for an excused absence as specified above);
- Non-School Sponsored - Private lessons, tutoring, counseling, and other services;
- Religious retreat or other church-related event other than a holy day;
- Runaway;
- Truancy; and
- Driver's license-related visits.

## Attendance for Credit

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who is in attendance for at least 75 percent but less than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may be given credit or a final grade for the class if the student completes a plan approved by the school's principal that provides for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class. An attendance committee (see below) may give class credit or a final grade to a student because of extenuating circumstances. Alternative ways for students to make up work or regain credit lost because of absences are established by the Board and must include at least one option that does not require a student to pay a fee. The availability of such option must be substantially the same as the availability of the educational program for which the District may charge a fee. [See policy FP] The attendance committee shall adhere to the following guidelines to determine attendance for award of credit or a final grade:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If make-up work is completed satisfactorily, excused absences that are allowed under compulsory attendance requirements shall be considered days of attendance for this purpose. [See policy FEA(LLEGAL)]
- A transfer or migrant student incurs absences only after his or her enrollment in the District. For a student transferring into the District after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.
- In reaching consensus about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that its decision is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit or be awarded a final grade.
- The committee may impose any of the following conditions for students with excessive absences to regain credit or be awarded a final grade:
  - Completing additional assignments, as specified by the committee or teacher.
  - Attending tutorial sessions as scheduled, which may include Saturday classes or before- and after-school programs.
  - Maintaining the attendance standards for the rest of the semester.
  - Taking an examination to earn credit. [See policy EHDB]
  - Attending a flexible school day program.
  - Attending summer school.

In all cases, the student must also earn a passing grade in order to receive credit.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the District's Board of Trustees in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL).

## **BULLYING OR TAUNTING BEHAVIORS**

Students must not participate, either individually or in a group, in bullying or taunting behaviors toward another student. Bullying has the meaning as defined in the Student Code of Conduct. Taunting behaviors may include but are not limited to repeated teasing or ridicule, name-calling, or gossip and rumors. A substantiated complaint against a student will result in disciplinary action, according to the nature of the offense and the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Procedures for Reporting Allegations of Bullying**

The District prohibits bullying on school property, at school-sponsored or school-related activities, or in any vehicle operated by the District. Bullying may be verbal or written expression or expression through electronic means, or physical conduct. Bullying is not tolerated by the District and any student or parent of a student who believes that the student or another student has experienced bullying or that a student has engaged in bullying is encouraged to immediately report the incident to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District professional employee. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited. Students or parents may report an alleged incident of bullying, orally or in writing, to a teacher, counselor, principal or other District employee. Students or parents may contact the District to obtain a report form that may be used to submit the complaint. Please note that after submission of the complaint to the District employee, the District may assign the complaint to a campus administrator to follow up on the submitted complaint and any other important matters pertaining to the complaint. We encourage you to communicate with your designated campus administrator during this time. More information about the District's bullying policy can be found in Board Policy FFI (LOCAL) online at the district website [www.sbcisd.net](http://www.sbcisd.net).

## **CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM (Feeding bodies...building minds)**

Breakfast, lunch and afterschool snacks are provided at *no charge* as part of the school day for all students enrolled in San Benito CISD. Having well-nourished students ready to learn is a priority in our District.

SBCISD participates in the federally funded United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, After School Snack Program and Seamless Summer Option. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) oversees these programs within the State. SBCISD operates these programs under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). The Child Nutrition Program (CNP) administers all USDA feeding programs within the District and ensures compliance with all federal, state and local guidelines.

Federal and State competitive food guidelines are very specific about the foods allowed on school campuses during the regular school day defined as *the midnight before the beginning of the official instructional day to 30 minutes after the end of the official instructional day*. The competitive food guidelines are outlined in the Smart Snacks guidelines and Competitive Food Nutrition Standards. More information regarding competitive food guidelines can be found at [www.squaremeals.org](http://www.squaremeals.org).

The District's Local Wellness Policy further defines the guidelines for foods sold or given to students during the course of the school day.

Food provided to students by a parent does not have to comply with the Federal or State guidelines. The food brought to the student by a parent is intended for the individual student and cannot be shared with other students. Food for birthday celebrations is exempt from the Federal and State guidelines and must come from an approved source. These celebrations will take place at the end of the school day as approved by campus administrator.

Menus for all schools are posted on [www.sbcisd.net](http://www.sbcisd.net) (Departments>Child Nutrition). More information regarding the Child Nutrition Program can be obtained by calling 956-361-6400 or by visiting [www.sbcisd.net](http://www.sbcisd.net) (Departments>Child Nutrition).

## **CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION (CTE)**

San Benito CISD offers a variety of Career & Technical Education courses in grades 9-12. For further information about these programs, please contact the Director for Career & Technology Education at (956) 361-6500.

## **CELLULAR PHONES/TELECOMMUNICATION/AUDIO/OR OTHER ENTERTAINMENT DEVICES**

Unless specifically permitted by District or campus-level administration, the District prohibits students from using or publicly displaying cellular telephones or other telecommunication devices before the last bell at the end of the school day. The District also prohibits using or publicly displaying audio or other entertainment devices at any time. For consequences regarding violation of the use of these items, see the Student Code of Conduct, page 15 (Possession of Telecommunications or Other Electronic Devices).

**The District will not be responsible for damaged, lost or stolen telecommunications devices.**

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER**

A student's home campus must be notified immediately of any change of address and telephone number where the student resides or where mail is sent concerning the student. If a student moves out of the District, the student's campus must be notified immediately.

## **CLOSED CAMPUS**

All District schools have been designated as closed campuses. Students are not permitted to leave their campus during regular school hours, unless they are accompanied by their parents, legal guardians or designee of record.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES /CONDITIONS**

To protect other students from contagious illnesses/conditions, students infected with certain diseases/conditions are not allowed to come to school while contagious. If a parent suspects that his or her child has a communicable or contagious disease/condition, the parent should contact the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed can be alerted. The school nurse or the principal's office can provide information from the Texas Department of Health regarding these diseases. Parents of a student with a communicable or contagious disease/condition should phone the school nurse or principal so that other students who might have been exposed to the disease can be alerted.

Schools must exclude a student from attendance while the disease is contagious and until the re-admittance criteria have been met. [See policy FFAD]

### **BACTERIAL MENINGITIS**

State law specifically requires the District to provide the following information:

#### **WHAT IS MENINGITIS?**

Meningitis is an inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal cord. It can be caused by viruses, parasites, fungi, and bacteria. Viral meningitis is most common and the least serious. Bacterial meningitis is the most common form of serious bacterial infection with the potential for serious, long-term complications. It is an uncommon disease, but requires urgent treatment with antibiotics to prevent permanent damage or death.

#### **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?**

Someone with meningitis will become very ill. The illness may develop over one or two days, but it can also rapidly progress in a matter of hours. Not everyone with meningitis will have the same symptoms. Children (over 1 year old) and adults with meningitis may have a severe headache, high temperature, vomiting, sensitivity to bright lights, neck stiffness or joint pains, and drowsiness or confusion. In both children and adults, there may be a rash of tiny, red-purple spots. These can occur anywhere on the body. The diagnosis of bacterial meningitis is based on a combination of symptoms and laboratory results.

#### **HOW SERIOUS IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?**

If it is diagnosed early and treated promptly, the majority of people make a complete recovery. In some cases it can be fatal or a person may be left with a permanent disability.

#### **HOW IS BACTERIAL MENINGITIS SPREAD?**

Fortunately, none of the bacteria that cause meningitis are as contagious as diseases like the common cold or the flu, and they are not spread by casual contact or by simply breathing the air where a person with meningitis has been. The germs live naturally in the back of our noses and throats, but they do not live for long outside the body. They are spread when people exchange saliva (such as by kissing; sharing drinking containers, utensils, or cigarettes). The germ does not cause meningitis in most people. Instead, most people become carriers of the germ for days, weeks, or even months. The bacteria rarely overcome the body's immune system and cause meningitis or another serious illness.

#### **HOW CAN BACTERIAL MENINGITIS BE PREVENTED?**

Do not share food, drinks, utensils, toothbrushes, or cigarettes. Limit the number of persons you kiss.

Vaccines against pneumococcal disease are recommended both for young children and adults over 64. A vaccine against four meningococcal serogroups (A, C, Y, and W-135) is available. These four groups cause the majority of meningococcal cases in the United States. Also, a vaccine is recommended by some groups for college students, particularly freshmen living in dorms or residence halls. The vaccine is safe and effective (85–90 percent). It can cause mild side effects, such as redness and pain at the injection site lasting up to two days. Immunity develops within seven to ten days after the vaccine is given and lasts for up to five years.

#### **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOU OR A FRIEND MIGHT HAVE BACTERIAL MENINGITIS?**

You should seek prompt medical attention.

#### **WHERE CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION?**

Your school nurse, family doctor, and the staff at your local or regional health department office are excellent sources for information on all communicable diseases. You may also call your local health department or Regional Texas Department of Health office to ask about meningococcal vaccine. Additional information may also be found at the web sites for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/>, and the Texas Department of Health, <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/>.

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS (MRSA) IN SCHOOLS AS PER THE CDC:**

### **WHAT TYPE OF INFECTIONS DOES MRSA CAUSE?**

In the community most MRSA infections are skin infections that may appear as pustules or boils which often are red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. These skin infections commonly occur at sites of visible skin trauma, such as cuts and abrasions, and areas of the body covered by hair (e.g. back of neck, groin, buttock, armpit, beard area of men). Almost all MRSA skin infections can be effectively treated by drainage of pus with or without antibiotics.

### **HOW IS MRSA TRANSMITTED?**

MRSA is usually transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or contact with shared items or surfaces that have come in contact with someone else's skin infection (e.g. towels, used bandages).

### **IN WHAT SETTINGS DO MRSA SKIN INFECTIONS OCCUR?**

MRSA skin infections can occur anywhere. Some settings have factors that make it easier for MRSA to be transmitted.

- These factors, referred to as the 5 C's, are as follows: Crowding, Contact, Cuts, Contamination, and Cleanliness.
- Locations where the 5 C's are common include schools, dormitories, households, correctional facilities, and daycare centers.

### **HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF FROM GETTING MRSA?**

You can protect yourself by:

- practicing good hygiene (e.g., keeping your hands clean by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and showering immediately after participating in exercise);
- covering skin trauma such as abrasions or cuts with a clean dry bandage until healed;
- avoiding sharing personal items (e.g., towels, razors) that come into contact with your bare skin; and using a barrier (e.g., clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment such as weight-training benches;
- Maintaining a clean environment by establishing cleaning procedures for frequently touched surfaces and surfaces that come in direct contact with people's skin.

### **SHOULD SCHOOLS CLOSE BECAUSE OF AN MRSA INFECTION?**

The decision to close a school for any communicable disease should be made by school officials in consultation with local and or state public health officials. However, in most cases, it is not necessary to close schools because of an MRSA infection in a student. It is important to note that MRSA transmission can be prevented by simple measures such as hand hygiene and covering skin infections.

### **SHOULD THE SCHOOL BE CLOSED TO BE CLEANED OR DISINFECTED WHEN AN MRSA INFECTION OCCURS?**

Covering infections will greatly reduce the risks of surfaces becoming contaminated with MRSA. In general it is not necessary to close schools to "disinfect" them when MRSA infections occur. MRSA skin infections are transmitted primarily by skin-to-skin contact and contact with surfaces that have come into contact with someone else's skin infection. When MRSA skin infections occur, cleaning and disinfection should be performed on surfaces that are likely to contact uncovered or poorly covered infections. Cleaning surfaces with detergent-based cleaners or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) -registered disinfectants is effective at removing MRSA from the environment.

### **SHOULD THE ENTIRE SCHOOL COMMUNITY BE NOTIFIED OF EVERY MRSA INFECTION?**

Usually, it should not be necessary to inform the entire school community about a single MRSA infection. When an MRSA infection occurs within the school population, the school nurse and school physician should determine, based on their medical judgment, whether some or all students, parents and staff should be notified. Consultation with the local public health authorities should be used to guide this decision.

### **SHOULD THE SCHOOL BE NOTIFIED THAT MY CHILD HAS AN MRSA INFECTION?**

Parents are not required to notify school officials of an MRSA infection.

### **SHOULD STUDENTS WITH MRSA SKIN INFECTIONS BE EXCLUDED FROM ATTENDING SCHOOL?**

Unless directed by a physician, students with MRSA infections should not be excluded from attending school. Exclusion from school and sports activities should be reserved for those with wound drainage ("pus") that cannot be covered and contained with a clean, dry bandage and for those who cannot maintain good personal hygiene.

### **I HAVE AN MRSA SKIN INFECTION. HOW DO I PREVENT SPREADING IT TO OTHERS?**

Cover your wound. Keep wounds that are draining or have pus covered with clean, dry bandages until healed. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions on proper care of the wound. Pus from infected wounds can contain staph, including MRSA, so keeping the infection covered will help prevent the spread to others. Bandages and tape can be discarded with the regular trash. Clean your hands frequently. You, your family, and others in close contact should wash their hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after changing the bandage or touching the infected wound. Do not share personal items. Avoid sharing personal items, such as towels, washcloths, razors, clothing, or uniforms that may have had contact with the infected wound or bandage. Wash sheets, towels, and clothes that become soiled with water and laundry detergent. Use a dryer to dry clothes completely.

### **REPORTING AND OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT:**

As per HCHD, Staph is not typically subject to mandatory disease reporting in Texas. If more than two staph infections occur in the same setting (classroom or office), it is possible that transmission is occurring in that setting.

## **COMPLAINTS AND CONCERNS BY STUDENTS OR PARENTS**

Usually student or parent complaints or concerns can be addressed simply—by a phone call or a conference with the teacher. For those complaints and concerns that cannot be handled so easily, the District has adopted a standard complaint policy at FNG in the District's policy manual. A copy of this policy may be obtained in the principal's office or on-line at the San Benito CISD website at [www.sbcisd.net](http://www.sbcisd.net). In general, the student or parent should first discuss the complaint with the campus principal. If unresolved, a written complaint and a request for a conference should be sent to the Superintendent. If still unresolved, the District provides for the complaint to be presented to the Board of Trustees.

## **COMPUTER RESOURCES**

To prepare students for an increasingly computerized society, the District has made a substantial investment in computer technology for instructional purposes. Use of these resources is restricted to students working under a teacher's supervision and for approved purposes only. **Students and their parents will be asked to sign a user agreement regarding use of these resources; violations of this agreement may result in withdrawal of privileges and other disciplinary action.** Students and their parents should be aware that e-mail using District computers is not private and may be monitored by District staff. [For additional information, see policy CQ]

## **CONDUCT**

As required by law, the District has developed and adopted a Student Code of Conduct that prohibits certain behaviors and establishes standards of acceptable behavior—both on and off campus—and consequences for violation of the standards. Students and parents need to be familiar with the standards set out in the Student Code of Conduct, as well as campus and classroom rules. See the SBCISD Student Code of Conduct for prohibited behaviors and standards of acceptable behavior. To achieve the best possible learning environment for all students, the Student Code of Conduct and other campus rules of behavior will apply whenever the interest of the District is involved, on or off school grounds, in conjunction with or independent of classes and school-sponsored activities. The District has disciplinary authority over a student in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

## **COUNSELING**

### **Academic Counseling**

Students and their parents are encouraged to talk with a school counselor, teacher, or principal to learn about course offerings, the graduation requirements of various programs, and early graduation procedures. Each spring, students in grades 6 through 12 will be provided information on anticipated course offerings for the next year and other information that will help to make the most of academic and career opportunities. To plan for the future, including attendance at a college, university, or training school or pursuit of some other type of advanced education, students should work closely with the counselor in order to take the high school courses that best prepare them. The counselor can also provide information about entrance exams and deadlines for application, as well as information about automatic admission to state colleges and universities, financial aid, housing, and scholarships.

### **Personal Counseling**

The school counselor is available to assist students with a wide range of personal concerns, including such areas as social, family, or emotional issues, or substance abuse. The counselor may also make available information about community outreach resources and agencies to address these concerns.

**Please note:** The school will not conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment without first obtaining the parent's written consent, unless required by state or federal law for special education purposes or by the Texas Education Agency for child abuse investigations and reports. [For more information, refer to policy FFE and FFG (EXHIBIT)]

## **DAMAGE TO SCHOOL PROPERTY**

No student shall damage or deface any District building or grounds. A parent or other person who has the duty of control and reasonable discipline of a child is liable for any property damage proximately caused by:

1. The negligent conduct of the child if the conduct is reasonably attributable to the negligent failure of the parent or other person to exercise that duty; or
2. The willful and malicious conduct of a child who is at least twelve years of age but under eighteen years of age.

If a child, age ten through sixteen, engages in conduct that results in damage to District property, the District may institute formal charges for the purpose of having the juvenile court order the child, or parent, to make full or partial restitution to the District in accordance with law. [For further information, see policy FNCB]

## **DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION**

The District believes that all students learn best in an environment free from dating violence, discrimination, harassment and retaliation and that their welfare is best served when they can work free from this prohibited conduct while attending school. Students are expected to treat other students and District employees with courtesy and respect; to avoid behaviors known to be offensive; and to stop those behaviors when asked or told to stop. District employees are expected to treat students with courtesy and respect. The Board has established policies and procedures to prohibit and promptly respond to inappropriate and offensive behaviors that are based on a person's race, color, religion, Gender, national origin, or disability or any other basis prohibited by law. [See policy FFH]

## **Dating Violence**

Dating violence occurs when a person in a current or past dating relationship intentionally uses physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse to harm, threaten, intimidate or control the other partner. Dating violence or abusive conduct of a sexual nature is considered harassment if the conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; or creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile or offensive educational environment; substantially or unreasonably interferes with the student's academic performance; or otherwise adversely affects the student's educational opportunities. Examples of dating violence against a student may include, but are not limited to, physical or sexual assaults, name-calling, put-downs, threats to hurt the student or the student's family members or members of the student's household, destroying property belong to the student, threats to commit suicide or homicide if the student ends the relationship, attempts to isolate the student from friends and family, stalking, or encouraging others to engage in these behaviors

## **Discrimination**

Discrimination is defined as any conduct directed at a student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability or any other basis prohibited by law, that negatively affects the student.

## **Harassment**

Harassment in general terms, is conduct so severe, persistent or pervasive that it affects the student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity; creates an intimidating, threatening, hostile or offensive educational environment; or substantially interferes with the student's academic performance. Examples of harassment may include, but are not limited to, offensive or derogatory language directed at a person's religious beliefs or practices, accent, skin color or need for accommodation; threatening or intimidating conduct; offensive jokes, name-calling, slurs, or rumors; physical aggression or assault; graffiti or printed material promoting racial, ethnic or other negative stereotypes; or other kinds of aggressive conduct such as theft or damage to property.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment of a student by an employee, volunteer, or another student is prohibited. Sexual harassment of a student by an employee or volunteer does not include necessary or permissible physical contact not reasonably construed as sexual in nature. However, romantic and other inappropriate social relationships, as well as all sexual relationships, between students and District employees are prohibited, even if consensual. Examples of prohibited sexual harassment may include, but not be limited to, touching private body parts or coercing physical contact that is sexual in nature; sexual advances; jokes or conversations of a sexual nature; and other sexually motivated conduct, communications, or contact.

## **Retaliation**

Retaliation against a person who makes a good faith report of discrimination or harassment, including dating violence, is prohibited. Retaliation against a person who is participating in an investigation of alleged discrimination or harassment is also prohibited. A person who makes a false claim or offers false statements or refuses to cooperate with a District investigation, however, may be subject to appropriate discipline. Retaliation against a student might occur when a student receives threats from another student or an employee or when an employee imposes an unjustified punishment or unwarranted grade reduction. Retaliation does not include petty slights and annoyances from other students or negative comments from a teacher that are justified by a student's poor academic performance in the classroom.

## **Reporting Procedures**

Any student who believes that he or she has experienced dating violence, discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should immediately report the problem to a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee. The report may be made by the student's parent. See policy FFH (LOCAL) for the appropriate District officials to whom to make a report.

## **Investigation of Report**

To the extent possible, the District will respect the privacy of the student; however, limited disclosures may be necessary to conduct a thorough investigation and to comply with law. Allegations of prohibited conduct, which includes dating violence, discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, will be promptly investigated. The District will notify the parents of any student alleged to have experienced prohibited conduct involving an adult associated with the District. In the event prohibited conduct involves another student, the District will notify the parents of the student alleged to have experienced the prohibited conduct when the allegations, if proven, would constitute a violation as defined by policy. If the District's investigation indicates that prohibited conduct occurred, appropriate disciplinary or corrective action will be taken to address the conduct. The District may take disciplinary action even if the conduct that is the subject of the complaint was not unlawful. A student or parent who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation may appeal in accordance with policy FNG (LOCAL).

## **DISCRIMINATION**

See DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

## **DISPLAY OF YOUR CHILD'S ARTWORK, PROJECTS, AND OTHER SPECIAL WORK PRODUCTS**

As a parent, if you choose that your child's artwork, special projects, photographs and the like not be displayed to the community on the District's Web site, in printed material, by video, or any other method of communication, you must notify the principal in writing.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED MATERIALS OR DOCUMENTS**

### **School Materials**

Publications prepared by and for the school may be posted or distributed, with prior approval by the principal, sponsor, or teacher. Such items may include school posters, brochures, murals, etc. The school newspaper and the yearbook are available to students. All school publications are prepared under the supervision of a teacher, sponsor, and the principal.

### **Non-school Materials from Students**

Unless a student obtains specific prior approval from the principal, written materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, petitions, films, tapes, posters, or other visual or auditory materials that were not developed under the oversight of the school may not be posted, sold, circulated, or distributed on any school campus. To be considered, any non-school material must include the name of the sponsoring organization or individual. The decision regarding approval will be made in two school days. The student may appeal the principal's decision in accordance with policy FNG. Any student who posts material without prior approval will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Materials displayed without this approval will be removed.

### **Non-school Materials from Others**

Written or printed materials, handbills, photographs, pictures, films, tapes, or other visual or auditory materials not sponsored by the District or by a District-affiliated school support organization will not be sold, circulated, distributed, or posted on any District premises by any District employee or by persons or groups not associated with the District, except as permitted by policy GKDA. To be considered, any non-school material must meet the limitations on content established in the policy and include the name of the sponsoring organization or individual.

## **DRESS CODE FOR STUDENTS**

The District's dress code is established to teach grooming and hygiene, instill discipline, prevent disruption, avoid safety hazards, and teach respect for authority.

Students shall be dressed and groomed in a manner that is clean and neat and that will not be a health or safety hazard to themselves or others.

The District prohibits any clothing or grooming that in the principal's judgment may reasonably be expected to cause disruption of or interference with normal school operations.

### **The District prohibits:**

1. Pictures, emblems, or writing on clothing and personal items that:
  - a. Is lewd, offensive, vulgar, obscene, or violent.
  - b. Advertises or depicts tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, drugs, or any other prohibited substance.
  - c. **Is distracting or draws attention to the student that, at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee, is inappropriate.**
2. The wearing of see-through shirts or blouses, sleeveless undershirts, muscle shirts, vests, cutoff T-shirts, tube tops, tank tops and any blouse or shirt that does not cover the stomach or waist, even if covered by another piece of clothing such as a sweater or jacket.
3. The wearing of low-cut, shoulder less/strapless, spaghetti strap or string tie/halter blouses, shirts or dresses and clothing where undergarments can be seen.
4. Brand name tags and imprints on clothing and personal items that may be depicted as negative and/or offensive (i.e. "Drunken Monkey", "Drunkmunky", "Homies", etc.). **Discretion by the principal or his/her designee will prevail.**
5. Paraphernalia/accessories, activities, and/or gestures, which symbolize gang and/or group membership, including the following:
  - a. Wearing beads and/or crosses that are all black, embroidered, or are identified with gang and/or group colors.
  - b. Wearing tee shirts, sweat shirts, windbreakers, and jackets that depict the identity of a particular gang and/or group.
  - c. Wearing shoes that identify with a particular gang and/or group, such as tennis shoes or sports shoes altered from their original color with paint or markers, shoe laces depicting a gang and/or group color, etc.
  - d. Wearing gang- and/or group-related clothing combinations such as a shirt/pant combination in a particular color or colors.
  - e. Participating in any gang and/or group fights, and any act of violence against a student or school personnel.
  - f. Exhibiting any behavior or gestures that symbolize gang and/or group membership, or are associated with gangs and/or groups.
  - g. Vandalizing school property with gang- and/or group-related signs or literature. All students are also prohibited from possessing folders, book covers, etc., which depict gang- and/or group-related signs or literature.
  - h.

The outlined code regarding specific modes, paraphernalia/accessories, activities, or gestures of the student body is subject to change at any time when a gang and/or group changes its identifying colors, paraphernalia/accessories, activities, or gestures. The aforementioned code also applies to any new gang and/or group, or any gang and/or group changes its identifying colors, paraphernalia/accessories, activities, or gestures. The aforementioned code also applies to any new gang and/or group, or any gang and/or group not mentioned herein.



In addition:

1. The District has adopted a standardized dress code for students in grades PK-8. [See Policy FNCA(LOCAL)]
2. All clothing must be worn in a proper, customary manner.
3. Over-sized, ill-fitting pants and other similar items of clothing are not allowed.
4. Students are prohibited from wearing pants below the waistline that are designed to be worn at the waistline.
5. Students are prohibited from wearing pants that expose skin at the waistline unless a tucked-in shirt/blouse is worn that is long enough to cover skin at all times (i.e. when raising arms, bending over, sitting down, etc.).
6. Capri pants or crop pants that are not tight-fitting will be allowed. Bermuda shorts are not considered to be Capri pants or crop pants. **Discretion by the principal or his/her designee will prevail.**
7. Leggings, jogging pants, and form-fitting (stretch, spandex, etc.) pants are not allowed.
8. All shirts designed to be tucked in must be tucked in correctly. **Discretion by the principal or his/her designee will prevail.**
9. Students shall wear appropriate undergarments. No pajama-type clothing is allowed. Clothing where undergarments can be seen is prohibited. Torn or tattered clothing or clothing that exposes skin and/or underwear is not allowed.
10. Shorts:
  - a. Refer to the Campus Mode of Dress Policy.
  - b. **The discretion of the principal or his/her designee will prevail.**
11. Dresses and skirts:
  - a. Refer to the Campus Mode of Dress Policy.
  - b. **The discretion of the principal or his/her designee will prevail.**
12. Trench coats, dusters, hooded sweatshirts, and overcoats are not allowed, except in inclement weather. Hoods are not to be worn inside buildings. At the junior high level, pullover sweatshirts without zippers are not allowed.
13. Hats, caps, hoods, beanies, sweatbands, hairnets, and bandanas are not allowed. Headbands must be worn appropriately to restrain hair, and not across the forehead.
14. Sunglasses are prohibited unless prescribed.
15. Appropriate footwear shall be worn at school. Shoes that present a safety concern are not allowed. Sneakers/Tennis shoes should be worn for PE participation. Flip-flops/thongs and/or soccer slides are not allowed. Steel toe footwear is not allowed. All footwear must have a closed heel or have a strap around the rear of the ankle in grades Pre-K through 8. Socks must be worn, when appropriate.
16. Hair must be clean, neatly combed and out of the eyes and face. Hair that is styled in a manner that is extreme, outlandish, distracting or draws attention to the student is not allowed.
17. Tattoos must be covered for all elementary and junior high school students. At the high school level, the covering of tattoos will be at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee.
18. Grooming, combing hair, and applying make-up or nail polish are not allowed in the classroom.
19. The District has adopted standardized attire for all students assigned to the Joe Callandret Positive Redirection Center (PRC). All students assigned to the DAEP (PRC) will adhere to the standardized dress requirement. The dress code will be discussed with the students and parents during the registration process.
20. **The discretion of the principal or his/her designee will prevail.**

## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT AND INFORMATION**

Parents/guardians are asked to update their child's medical history yearly, especially in regard to medications, foods, insect bites, etc. In case of a medical emergency, the parent is also asked to give their consent to give/obtain emergency medical treatment. Please contact the school nurse to update any new information.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Participation in school and school-related activities is an excellent way for a student to develop talents, receive individual recognition, and build strong friendships with other students; participation, however, is a privilege, not a right.

Eligibility for participation in many of these activities is governed by state law as well as rules of the University Interscholastic League (UIL) — a statewide association overseeing inter-district competition. The following requirements apply to all extracurricular activities:

- A student who receives at the end of a grading period a grade below 70 in any academic class, other than a class identified as honors or advanced by either the State Board of Education or by the local Board of Trustees, may not participate in extracurricular activities for at least three school weeks.
- A student with disabilities who fails to meet the standards in the individualized education program (IEP) may not participate for at least three school weeks.
- An ineligible student may practice or rehearse.
- A student is allowed in a school year up to ten absences not related to post-district competition, a maximum of five absences for post-district competition prior to state, and a maximum of two absences for state competition. All extracurricular activities and public performances, whether UIL activities or other activities approved by the Board, are subject to these restrictions.
- A student who misses a class because of participation in an activity that has not been approved will receive an unexcused absence.

**Please note:** Sponsors and coaches of extracurricular activities, including interscholastic athletics and marching band, may develop and enforce standards of behavior that are higher than the District-developed Student Code of Conduct and may condition membership or participation in the activity on adherence to those standards. Extracurricular standards of behavior may take into consideration conduct that occurs at any time, on or off school property. No provision of an extracurricular behavioral standard shall have the effect of discriminating on the basis of gender, race, disability, religion, or ethnicity.

The principal shall approve such behavior standards before they are communicated to students. Students shall be informed of any extracurricular behavior standards at the beginning of each school year or, in the case of interscholastic athletics and marching band, at the time the students report for workouts or practices that occur prior to the actual beginning of classes. Students and their parents shall sign and return to the sponsor or coach a statement that they have read the extracurricular behavior standards and consent to them as a condition of participation in the activity. Organizational standards of conduct of an extracurricular activity are independent of the Student Code of Conduct. Violations of these standards of conduct that are also violations of the Student Code of Conduct may result in the independent disciplinary actions. If a violation is also a violation of school rules, the consequences specified by the Student Code of Conduct or by local policy will apply in addition to any consequences specified by the organization. [For further information, see policies FM, FO and FNC].

## **FEES**

Materials that are part of the basic educational program are provided with state and local funds and are at no charge to a student. A student, however, is expected to provide his or her own pencils, paper, erasers, and notebooks and may be required to pay certain other fees or deposits, including:

- Costs for materials for a class project that the student will keep.
- Membership dues in voluntary clubs or student organizations and admission fees to extracurricular activities.
- Personal physical education and athletic equipment and apparel.
- Voluntarily purchased pictures, publications, class rings, yearbooks, graduation announcements, etc.
- Voluntarily purchased student accident insurance.
- Musical instrument rental and uniform maintenance, when uniforms are provided by the District.
- Personal apparel used in extracurricular activities that becomes the property of the student.
- Parking fees and student identification cards.
- Fees for lost, damaged, or overdue library books.

## **FOOD ALLERGY NOTIFICATION**

The District must request, at the time of enrollment, that the Parent or Guardian of each student attending a District school disclose the student's food allergies.

## **FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION**

See BULLYING OR TAUNTING BEHAVIORS

See CONDUCT

See HAZING

See SEXUAL HARASSMENT / SEXUAL ABUSE

## **GRADING POLICY (ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY)**

### **ELEMENTARY GRADING POLICY- Including Homework Guidelines**

Contents: **Administrative Procedures for Academic Achievement, Promotion, Retention, and Placement**

- Philosophy and Rationale
- Promotion, Retention, and Placement Indicators
- Explanation of Marks
- Report Card Guidelines
- Guidelines for Grading
- Parent - Teacher Communication
- Homework Guidelines

### **PHILOSOPHY AND RATIONALE**

The philosophy of the San Benito Consolidated Independent School District, concerning academic achievement, promotion, retention, and placement is based on the recognition that each child is an individual. Therefore, when considering promotion, retention, or placement, attention must be given to all aspects of the student's development in order to accommodate individual needs and to promote the full development of the learner's potential.

Careful monitoring shall occur at every grade level to assure mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Each child should progress to the level of scholastic achievement expected for the assigned grade. The student's achievement or lack of achievement shall be made known to parents. Whenever it becomes apparent that retention is a possibility, this concern shall also be made known to the parents.

Procedures are established for early identification and acceleration of students who are failing to make satisfactory progress, including Response to Intervention (RtI). It is necessary to ensure ongoing review through the elementary grades so that students who encounter difficulty are identified and not permitted to continue without academic acceleration.

Promotion and grade level advancement shall be based on mastery of the curriculum. Expectations and standards for promotion shall be established for each grade level, content area, and course and shall be coordinated with compensatory/accelerated services. (EIE Local/EHBC Legal)

### **PROMOTION, RETENTION, AND PLACEMENT INDICATORS**

Standards for promotion on every grade level shall be primarily based upon mastery of the TEKS in basic subject areas. The following indicators may be used (as appropriate) to verify that the student has mastered the necessary TEKS in subject areas:

#### **I. STATE**

- A. TPRI (Texas Primary Reading Inventory) / TEJAS LEE
- B. STAAR (State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness)
- C. Senate Bill 4 (elimination of social promotion)
- D. TEC 28.0211 Satisfactory Performance on Assessment Instruments Required  
(Accelerated Instruction)
  - **A student may not be promoted to:**
    - Sixth grade if the student does not perform satisfactorily on STAAR fifth grade math and reading assessments (Appendix V - page 17).
  - See Student Success Initiative (SSI) [www.tea.state.tx.us](http://www.tea.state.tx.us)

#### **II. LOCAL**

- A. TEKS Resource System Curriculum Collaborative
- B. Informal Inventories
- C. Teacher-made materials/assessments
- D. Campus Assessments
- E. Observations
- F. Textbook Assessments
- G. EduSmart Science
- H. STEM scopes (Science-Grades Kindergarten - 5th)
- I. Saxon Phonics and Spelling (Grades Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- J. Center for Improving Readiness of Children for Learning and Education (CIRCLE - Prekindergarten)

**III. ATTENDANCE** - A student shall be given credit for a class only if the student has met the academic criteria and has been in attendance 90% of the days the class is offered. The campus Attendance Review Committee (ARC) may give the student credit if there are extenuating circumstances for the absences. (See **Appendix III** Petition for Class/Grade Level Credit Form, pages 12 -15)

**IV. Summer School** - Supplemental services will be provided through Federal funds for students who do not pass one or any of the core subject areas with a yearly average grade of 70 or above in their respective grade. Students must have a documented RTI (on eSTAR) with a minimum of one grading period of interventions. Students must attend summer school and maintain a 70% or above average in order to be considered for promotion to the next grade level. In addition, students must meet attendance requirements during summer school (no more than two (2) absences).

**Any struggling kindergarten student must be included in the Intervention and Remediation Process.** (See Appendix I Rtl)

**V. Extended Day/Week** - Students who are not successfully meeting passing standards on the TEKS will be provided assistance through extended day/week to remediate and assist in meeting the passing standards for promotion.

## EXPLANATION OF MARKS

### Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Achievement or progress shall be reported as:

**S** - Satisfactory (a student who is developing at expected level)

**P** - Making Progress (a student who needs additional time and practice to acquire concepts)

**N** - Needs Improvement (a student who is experiencing difficulty)

A copy of the final Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten report card shall be kept on file in the student's cumulative folder (permanent record) as documentation of promotion.

*Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten grades are not to be recorded on cumulative folder (permanent record).*

### Grades 1-5 Academics / Subjects

Defining progress as movement toward mastery of the TEKS as required by the laws of the State of Texas, the following grading scale applies:

<b>90 - 100</b>	Excellent Progress
<b>80 - 89</b>	Good Progress
<b>75 - 79</b>	Meets Expectations
<b>70 - 74</b>	Needs Improvement
<b>0 - 69</b>	Unsatisfactory

Mastery of the skills necessary for success at the next level shall be validated by assessments that may either be incorporated into units or final exams, or may be administered separately. Mastery of at least 70% of the objectives shall be required. (EIE Local)

In grades 1-5, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) for each subject area (Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Reading and Grammar / Composition / Spelling). (EIE Local)

In the elementary grades 1-5, achievement shall be reported to parents as numerical grades for Reading, Mathematics, Grammar / Composition / Spelling, Social Studies, and Science. (EIA Local)

E, S, N, and U will be used for Handwriting, Health, Fine Arts, Physical Education, Conduct, and Technology. If a numerical basis is needed to arrive at these grades, the following values will be used:

<b>E</b>	=	<b>90 - 100</b>	Excellent Progress
<b>S</b>	=	<b>80 - 89</b>	Satisfactory Progress
<b>N</b>	=	<b>70 - 79</b>	Needs Improvement
<b>U</b>	=	<b>below 70</b>	Unsatisfactory

## CUMULATIVE FOLDER (PERMANENT RECORD)

A student's cumulative folder (permanent record) of a school year should be prepared carefully and professionally.

- Information on the front (student's legal name, grade, teacher's name, etc.) will be typed or printed.
- All entries **must** be in black ink; **absolutely no red ink or correction fluid.**
- Errors must be crossed out with a slash (/) and initialed over an entry.

If a student transfers from one San Benito elementary campus to another during the school year, grades and attendance from both schools shall be averaged to determine final yearly averages for the permanent report card.

For students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, a copy of the final report card must be STAPLED in the student's cumulative folder.

**DO NOT RECORD** Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten grades on cumulative folder (permanent record).

If a student is in attendance at another school in the state of Texas, grades will be averaged together with San Benito School District grades to make promotion decisions. Students must be in attendance in San Benito CISD for a minimum of 50% of the six weeks grading period in order to be awarded credit.

If a student transfers from an out of state campus, the principal will use reasonable standards to make grading/promotion decisions.

If transfer grades are based on a nine (9) week grading system, the following formula will be applied:

**CONVERSION OF 9 WEEKS REPORT CARD GRADES**

Use the following formula if a student enrolls having completed 9 instructional weeks from the sending district.

1. Take the 1<sup>st</sup> 9 weeks grade and use as the 1<sup>st</sup> 6 weeks grade.
2. Average 1<sup>st</sup> 9 weeks grades with 2<sup>nd</sup> 9 weeks grade and post as 2<sup>nd</sup> 6 weeks grade average.
3. The 2<sup>nd</sup> 9 weeks grades automatically become the 3<sup>rd</sup> 6 weeks grades.

Example ONE (1) below:

SENDING DISTRICT GRADES				SBCISD GRADES			
	1 <sup>st</sup> 9 wks	2 <sup>nd</sup> 9 wks	Average	1 <sup>st</sup> 6 wks	2 <sup>nd</sup> 6 wks	3 <sup>rd</sup> 6 wks	Semester Average
Reading	80	70	75	80	75	70	75
ELA	86	88	87	86	87	88	87
Math	80	68	74	80	74	68	74
Science	76	86	81	76	81	86	81
So. Studies	96	90	93	96	93	90	93

If a student enrolls having completed less than 9 instructional weeks in the sending district, example 2 applies.

Example TWO (2) below:

Week 1	Week 2	Week3	WEEK4	Week 5	Week 6	Six Weeks Average		
83	83		83	83		87	90	
Previous District Grades			<b>CHILD ENROLLS with 83 Average</b>		SBCISD District Grades			87.5 – 88

Students must be in attendance in San Benito CISD for a minimum of 50% of the six weeks grading period in order to be awarded credit. Check with Campus Administrator before final grade is posted.

**REPORT CARDS**

All campuses will offer electronic report cards in grades 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>. Parents may access current student data, including grades, by visiting the parent portal under TxEIS (Texas Education Information System) on SBCISD website. Therefore, grades must be posted on a weekly basis.

Exclusive login/password information shall be obtained in the school office.

Comments on report cards should be positive and supportive. Specific concerns should be dealt with by means of conferences.

All report cards for each grade level must be turned in to the school's office prior to the day report cards are sent home. Principals and/or principal's designees must review the report cards and the gradesheets.

An electronic-copy of the entire grade book must be submitted to the school's office at the end of the school year. (i.e. USB drive and/or CD)

**GUIDELINES FOR GRADING**

Grades should reflect the student's academic achievement. Each teacher's grade book should contain a minimum of three (3) numerical grades per week in:

- Reading: 1 Comprehension Grade  
1 Vocabulary Grade  
1 Skill Grade
- Mathematics: 1 Basic Facts  
1 Problem Solving  
1 Skill/Concept
- Language Arts: 1 Grammar  
1 Composition

### 1 Spelling

Two numerical grades shall be reflected for Social Studies and Science and at least one (1) letter grade per week for Handwriting, Fine Arts, Health, Physical Education, and Technology. Teachers must post grades on a weekly basis. All students shall be given an opportunity to be retested after reteaching if he/she received a grade below 70 in any assessment or major class assignments. In this case, the highest grade a student can earn will be a 70.

It is **recommended** that any six weeks average earned that is less than 50 be posted as a 50 with a plan for improvement in order to allow the student an opportunity to pass. If a teacher chooses to post a 50 or below, the teacher must communicate to the parent and the principal the grade earned and develop a plan for improvement. EIA (Legal)

### Unexcused Absences

The grade for make-up work after an unexcused absence shall be reduced by 15 points.

### Makeup Work and Late Projects

Students shall be expected to make up assignments, projects, and tests after absences. Students shall receive a zero for any assignment, project, or test not made up within an allotted time. Assignments, projects, or tests, due to unexcused absences or late submission shall incur a 15 point reduction. A student shall be responsible for obtaining and completing the make-up work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. A reasonable amount of time for completion of an assignment will be established by the teacher.

### Suspension

The District shall impose a grade penalty for make-up work after an absence because of suspension. A grade no higher than an 85 shall recorded.

### Academic Dishonesty

Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall have a zero recorded for assignments or tests with no opportunity for retesting and shall be subject to disciplinary penalties in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes cheating or copying the work of another student, plagiarism, and unauthorized communication between students during an examination. The determination that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty shall be based on the judgment of the classroom teacher or another supervising professional employee, taking into consideration written materials, observation, or information from students. (EIA Local)

### Special Education Students / §504

Grades for students with disabilities and who attend designated classes will be based upon the student's progress toward achieving the TEKS identified by the Individual Education Plan (IEP). Also, as per the Special Education/ §504 policy, a student who fails two consecutive six weeks grading periods in the content areas, an Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee must convene to consider reason(s) for failure and for possible IEP modifications.

Promotion standards and appropriate assessment and acceleration options, as established by IEP or grade-level classification of students eligible for special education, shall be determined by the ARD committee. (EIE Local)

### English Language Learners

In assessing English language learners (ELLs) for mastery of the essential knowledge and skills, the District shall be flexible in determining methods to allow the students to demonstrate knowledge or competency independent of their English language skills in the following ways: (EIE Local)

- assessment in the primary language
- assessment using ESL methodologies
- English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) required by 19 TAC, Chapter 74, Subchapter A, §74.4
- assessment with multiple varied instruments (See EHBE)
- TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System)

### Response to Intervention (RtI)

RtI may be described as a model addressing the needs of all students through a continuum of services which provide: (1) high-quality instruction and scientific, researched-based, tiered intervention strategies aligned with individual student need; (2) frequent monitoring of student progress to make results-based academic or behavioral decisions; (3) data-based school improvement; and (4) the application of student response data to important educational decisions (such as those regarding placement, intervention, curriculum, and instructional goals and methodologies). The activities described above typically occur in the general education setting and must be electronically documented in the District's approved computerized program (Refer to RtI Framework).

## Reteaching

Reteaching will occur in any area where a student has not demonstrated mastery. Reteaching will be required only for students not mastering concepts specifically identified in the TEKS, assessments, or major class assignments. Planning for reteaching shall be documented in the teacher's lesson plans, as appropriate. When reteaching must occur, it must be accomplished with a different instructional strategy from the original presentation, such as:

- worksheets
- extra assignments
- peer tutoring,
- tutoring, and/or
- structured group activities
- other assignments as assigned by the teacher

## Enrichment

Enrichment activities should be designed to extend skills in logical thinking, strategic reasoning, estimation, mental arithmetic, and problem solving. Enrichment activities should not be additional work (busy work) or harder problems that expand upon the ideas presented in the traditional curriculum.

Enrichment activities can be provided through the use of learning centers, grouping within the classroom, whole class projects, and individualized programs. Other examples appropriate for enrichment activities include independent research projects, games that require the use of strategies or higher level thinking skills, and logic problems that require students to recognize patterns and apply sequencing skills.

## PARENT - TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Adequate explanations concerning the philosophy and purpose of report cards will be made.

At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, a progress report must be sent home for every student. Progress reports are intended to inform parents about their child's academic status.

Parent-teacher conferences are strongly encouraged as a means of discussing and reviewing students' strengths and weaknesses.

Report cards containing student grades in each subject must be provided to parents/guardians following each six-weeks reporting period. The report cards must provide for the signature of the parent/guardian and be returned to the school. If the report card with the parental signature is not returned to the school within five (5) school days, the district/school shall make a good faith effort to ensure that the parent/guardian is informed of the student's progress.

## HOMEWORK GUIDELINES

Homework assignments are necessary to provide enough time for students to master subject matter and complete long-term projects. Homework should be purposeful, adjusted to the level of the individual child, and related to specific objectives. Assignments should provide practice on skills already taught or prepare students to begin a new topic or part of a course.

1. If the homework is to have value, its purpose and relation to what has been learned in the classroom must be clearly understood by the student.
2. Sufficient explanation must be given so that students know WHAT they are to do, understand HOW to do it, realize WHY they are doing it, and are MOTIVATED to complete the assignment.
3. The homework assignment must pertain to previously taught skills.
4. The homework assignment must extend the student's knowledge of TEKS.
5. Homework assignments must be adapted to individual needs.
6. Homework assignments must be reasonable in view of the student's home resources.
7. Homework assignments must be properly evaluated and feedback must be provided to the student.  
Homework is **NOT** to be recorded as a grade in the grade book.
8. Documentation of homework assignment must be referenced in the lesson plan.
9. Homework should be an integral part of the classroom activities; it should **never be busy work** nor construed to be punishment.
10. Homework assignments should be avoided immediately before holidays or major special events.
11. Recommended homework time for Pre-K, K-2 is 30 minutes per night and 60 minutes per night for grades 3-5.

**In summary, if homework is carefully examined and constructed as a meaningful part of learning, it can be another step in the direction of bringing the school, the student, and the community closer together in a common interest for quality education.**

In an effort to reduce the number of retainees [EIE, Local] [EHBC, Legal], the school must complete required assessments, correctly identify students' weaknesses, and provide intensive reading/math instruction using an appropriate research-based **reading/math program**.

Students must be provided the following to ensure grade level academic success:

## **RESPONSE to INTERVENTION (RtI)**

1. Response to Intervention (RtI) is an approach that schools use to help all students, including struggling learners. The RtI approach gives Texas Students opportunities to learn and work at their grade level. The idea is to help all students be successful.
2. Teachers will continue to progress monitor until student responds to intervention(s) or referred for a full and individual evaluation for special education services or Section 504.
3. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI).
4. The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of the district to meet the needs of all struggling students.
5. To determine whether a student makes sufficient progress when provided interventions depends on the particular criteria of the scientific, research-based intervention. A school should consider alternative actions when a student fails to respond to an increasing intensity of instruction and interventions.
6. RtI does not replace the need for a comprehensive evaluation using a variety of data sources. A school will inform parents when a student is not making progress in the general education setting. If the student is not making progress in the general education setting and demonstrates lack of sufficient response to intervention(s) after an appropriate period of time, the school must request parental consent to evaluate a student suspected of having a learning disability.
7. The definition of "scientific, research-based" is in federal law at 20 USC, §7801(37). Local school districts are in the best position to determine interventions that qualify as meeting the definition of "scientific, research-based."
8. Any current struggling student MUST be subjected to all of the aforementioned requirements.

## **PARENT NOTIFICATION AND PROGRESS MONITORING**

1. Any time during a grading period that a student is in danger of failing, the teacher must make a documented contact with the parent by speaking with them on the phone, meeting in a conference, or sending written notification.
2. The teacher will provide frequent monitoring of student progress, as per RtI forms, and upon subsequent evaluation, if the deficiency has not been remediated, the student will be retained.
3. Parents and guardians will be provided strategies to use in helping their child succeed. (**Appendix II** - pages 10-11)

## **PROMOTION PROCESS FOR IDENTIFIED RETAINEE**

1. The retaineer's teacher submits documentation to the principal that RETENTION of the student is appropriate and is based on the student's academic record. (**Appendix IV** - page 16)
2. The principal reviews the documentation and discusses the recommendation with the teacher then decides if the student should be promoted or retained.

## **SECONDARY GRADING POLICY**

Please refer to the 2016-2017 San Benito CISD Secondary Grading policy available online at [www.sbcisd.net](http://www.sbcisd.net)

## **HARASSMENT**

See DATING VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND RETALIATION

## **HAZING**

Students must not participate, either individually or in a group, in hazing behaviors toward another student. Such behaviors involve any knowing, intentional, or reckless act, occurring on or off campus, by one person alone or acting with others, directed against a student, that endangers the mental, physical health or safety of a student for the purposes of pledging, initiation into, affiliation with, holding office in, or maintaining membership in an organization.



## **HEALTH SCREENINGS**

The District will conduct vision, hearing, spinal, and Acanthosis Nigricans checks in designated grades as per [Board Policy FFAA](#). In addition, the District conducts yearly height and weight screenings on all students. Other screenings conducted as needed include dental, head and blood pressure checks. Parents have the option to contact the school nurse if they refuse to have the screenings conducted at school and instead prefer to have their doctor conduct the screenings. Undiagnosed and untreated hearing/vision problems can interfere with learning and contribute to poor performance in school. If your child fails his/her hearing or vision screenings and is referred, you have 30 days from the date of the referral to submit examination results. If there is a financial need, please contact the campus nurse immediately. Please be advised that classroom accommodations will be made and implemented pending treatment.

## **HOMELESS LIAISON**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in January 2002, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. The Coordinator for Parental Engagement is the liaison for services to students who are determined to be homeless, as defined by federal law. To review McKinney Vento Homeless Program eligibility for services or assistance, contact (956) 361-6310. The Parental Engagement/Attendance Office is located at 355 E. Stenger Street San Benito, Texas 78586. The 2016-2017 McKinney Vento Homeless Handbook is available upon request.

## **HONOR ROLLS**

Honor rolls are established to recognize student academic achievement. The District shall publish the honor roll each six weeks in the local newspapers. The following criteria shall be followed in determining eligibility:

1. Grades 1-2: There shall be no honor roll.
2. Grades 3-5:
  - a. A student must have a grade average of 90 or above, with no C's.
  - b. Physical education, health, and fine arts grades shall not be included in the grade average.
3. Grades 6-12:
  - a. A student must have all A's;
  - b. A student must have one B with the remainder A's; or
  - c. A student must have a grade average of 90 or above, with no C's.

## **IMMUNIZATION**

A student must be fully immunized against certain diseases or must present a certificate or statement that, for medical or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, the student will not be immunized. For exemptions based on reasons of conscience, only official forms issued by the Texas Department of Health, Immunization Division, can be honored by the District. In order to qualify under this standard, a parent must use only an official proper form obtained in writing (after September 1, 2003) from the Texas Department of Health, Immunization Division, 1100 West 49<sup>th</sup> Street Austin, TX 78756. The form must be notarized and submitted to the principal or nurse within 90 days of notarization. Each child in the family must have a separate form. The school nurse can provide information on age-appropriate doses or on an acceptable physician-validated history of illness required by the Texas Department of Health. Proof of immunization may be personal records from a licensed physician or public health clinic with a signature or rubber-stamp validation.

Students cannot register without proper immunizations. For further information, see Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 25 Health Services Section 97.61 to 97.72.

Students, coming from another school district within Texas, that are unable to provide proper documentation can be given up to 30 days to provide a record. However, if their document shows them to be deficient, they must be immunized before coming to school.

If a student should not be immunized for medical reasons, the student or parent must present a certificate signed by a U.S. licensed physician stating that, in the doctor's opinion, the immunization required poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the student or any member of the student's family or household. This certificate must be renewed yearly unless the physician specifies a life-long condition. [For further information, see policy FFAB]

Meningococcal vaccine is being required for entrance by most colleges.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES**

### **Questioning of Students**

When law enforcement officers or other lawful authorities wish to question or interview a student at school:

- The principal will verify and record the identity of the officer or other authority and ask for an explanation of the need to question or interview the student at school.
- The principal ordinarily will make reasonable efforts to notify the parents unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal ordinarily will be present unless the interviewer raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection.
- The principal will cooperate fully regarding the conditions of the interview, if the questioning or interview is part of a child abuse investigation.

### **Students Taken Into Custody**

State law requires the District to permit a student to be taken into legal custody:

- To comply with an order of the juvenile court.
- To comply with the laws of arrest.
- By a law enforcement officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct in need of supervision.
- By a probation officer if there is probable cause to believe the student has violated a condition of probation imposed by the juvenile court.
- To comply with a properly issued directive to take a student into custody.
- By an authorized representative of Child Protective Services, Texas Department of Family and Protective and Regulatory Services, a law enforcement officer, or a juvenile probation officer, without a court order, under the conditions set out in the Family Code relating to the student's physical health or safety.

Before a student is released to a law enforcement officer or other legally authorized person, the principal will verify the officer's identity and, to the best of his or her ability, will verify the official's authority to take custody of the student. The principal will immediately notify the Superintendent and will ordinarily attempt to notify the parent unless the officer or other authorized person raises what the principal considers to be a valid objection to notifying the parents. Because the principal does not have the authority to prevent or delay a custody action, notification will most likely be after the fact.

### **Notification of Law Violations**

The District is also required by state law to notify:

- All instructional and support personnel who have responsibility for supervising a student who has been arrested or referred to the juvenile court for any felony offense or for certain misdemeanors.
- All instructional and support personnel who have regular contact with a student who has been convicted, received deferred prosecution, received deferred adjudication or adjudicated of delinquent conduct for any felony offense or certain misdemeanors.

[For further information, see policy GRA]

## **LEARNING DIFFICULTIES**

See SPECIAL PROGRAMS

## **MEDICINE AT SCHOOL**

Often, students have to take prescription medication for a certain period of time as treatment for a medical condition. If at all possible, we ask that you schedule the timing of the doses so that the child takes the medicine at home. If students have to take medicine at school, the parent/guardian must make a written request to the principal or nurse. The school nurse or other authorized school employee will administer medications only from a container that appears to be the properly labeled original prescription container or from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by the nurse from a properly labeled original prescription container. Only the nurse or other authorized school employees are permitted to administer prescription medicines at school. **Other than prescription asthma medicine, diabetic treatment or anaphylaxis treatment for students with severe allergies that may result in anaphylaxis, we do not permit students to carry their own medications and self-administer.** Students with asthma, diabetes or children with severe allergies that may result in anaphylaxis will be allowed to carry and self-administer their prescription asthma, diabetes or anaphylaxis medicine under certain conditions. The student must have demonstrated to his or her doctor and to the school nurse that the child has the skills necessary to self-administer the asthma, diabetes or anaphylaxis medicine. Additionally, the parent/guardian must provide us a written authorization for self-administration and a written statement from student's doctor that the student has asthma and is capable of self-administration and that includes the name and purpose of the medicine, the prescribed dosage, the times and circumstances for administration, and the period for which the medicine is prescribed. [For further information, see policy FFAC]

District employees will not give a student prescription medication, nonprescription medication, herbal substances, anabolic steroids, or dietary supplements, with the following exceptions:

- Authorized employees, in accordance with policy FFAC, may administer:
  - Prescription medication, provided by the parent, along with a written request, and in the original, properly labeled container.
  - Medication from a properly labeled unit dosage container filled by a registered nurse or another qualified District employee from the original, properly labeled container.
  - Nonprescription medication, provided by the parent, along with a written request, and in the original, properly labeled container.
  - Herbal or dietary supplements, provided by the parent, if required by the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan for a student with disabilities.
- In certain emergency situations, the District will maintain and administer to a student nonprescription medication, but only:
  - In accordance with the guidelines developed with the District's medical advisors; and
  - When the parent has previously provided written consent to emergency treatment on the District's form.

**Any medication that needs to be given more than ten consecutive days must, in addition to parent's signature, have a doctor's written order. Medications from Mexico will not be given. All medications will be kept in the nurse's office unless there are written orders to the contrary.**

## **OBTAINING INFORMATION AND PROTECTING STUDENT RIGHTS**

Your child will not be required to participate without parental consent in any survey, analysis, or evaluation—funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education—that concerns:

- Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent.
- Mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family.
- Sexual behavior or attitudes.
- Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior.
- Critical appraisals of individuals with whom the student has a close family relationship.
- Relationships privileged under law, such as relationships with lawyers, physicians, and ministers.
- Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.
- Income, except when the information is required by law and will be used to determine the student's eligibility to participate in a special program or to receive financial assistance under such a program.

**You will be able to inspect the survey or other instrument and any instructional materials used in connection with such a survey, analysis, or evaluation.** [For further information, see policy EF]

### **"Opting Out" of Surveys and Activities**

As a parent, you also have a right to receive notice and opt your child out of participating in:

- Any survey concerning the private information listed above, regardless of funding.
- School activities involving the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information gathered from your child for the purpose of marketing or selling that information.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered and scheduled by the school in advance and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of the student. Exceptions are hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under state law. [See policies EF and FFAA]
-

### As a parent, you also have a right:

- To request information regarding the professional qualifications of your child's teachers, including whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction; whether the teacher has an emergency permit or other provisional status for which state requirements have been waived; and undergraduate and graduate degree majors, graduate certifications, and the field of study of the certification or degree. You also have the right to request information about the qualifications of any paraprofessional who may provide services to your child.
- To review teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids and instructional materials used in the curriculum, and to examine tests that have been administered to your child.
- To inspect a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to your child.
- To review your child's student records when needed. These records include:
  - Attendance records,
  - Test scores,
  - Grades,
  - Disciplinary records,
  - Counseling records,
  - Psychological records,
  - Applications for admission,
  - Health and immunization information,
  - Other medical records,
  - Teacher and counselor evaluations,
  - Reports of behavioral patterns, and
  - State assessment instruments that have been administered to your child.
- To grant or deny any written request from the District to make a videotape or voice recording of your child. State law, however, permits the school to make a videotape or voice recording without parental permission for the following circumstances:
  - When it is to be used for school safety;
  - When it relates to classroom instruction or a co-curricular or extracurricular activity; or
  - When it relates to media coverage of the school.
- To remove your child temporarily from the classroom, if an instructional activity in which your child is scheduled to participate conflicts with your religious or moral beliefs. The removal cannot be for the purpose of avoiding a test and may not extend for an entire semester. Further, your child must satisfy grade-level and graduation requirements as determined by the school and by the Texas Education Agency.

### **PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**

See the District's website for a complete overview of the Parental Engagement Department at [www.sbcisd.net](http://www.sbcisd.net). The Parental Engagement Department is located at 355 E. Stenger Street San Benito, Texas 78586 Phone: (956) 361-6310 –District Coordinator for Parental Engagement/Attendance is Luis Gonzales, Jr. [lgonzales@sbcsid.net](mailto:lgonzales@sbcsid.net)

### **PARENTAL OBSERVATIONS**

Parents are welcome to observe their children in the classroom. In order to preserve an environment that is conducive to learning and for the safety of students, observations must be made in accordance with the following procedures.

1. The term "parents" means biological, adoptive, or foster parents and legal guardians as determined by court order. The term "parents" also includes other relatives with whom a student resides and who are standing in parental relation to the student (e.g., a grandparent with whom the student resides and who is acting as a parent in the absence of a biological or adoptive parent). Unless standing in parental relation to a student, other non-parent relatives or friends of the family are not permitted to observe students at school. Parent representatives and advocates are not permitted to observe students at school.
2. Observations are limited to two times per year (one time per semester).
3. Observations are limited to one class period.
4. The principal, in consultation with the teacher, will approve the date and time of all parental observations in advance.
5. Parents must first report to the campus office and comply with all procedures for visitors (e.g., showing identification, permitting a background check, if applicable, and obtaining a pass). At the discretion of school staff, a parent may be escorted to the classroom or accompanied during part or all of the observation.
6. For confidentiality and security purposes, parents may not take pictures or make audio or video recordings during observations.
7. If at any time, the teacher or principal determines that the observation is disruptive, the parent must immediately leave. Parents must leave the campus immediately upon the request of any district administrator or security personnel.
8. These classroom observation procedures do not apply to parents' having lunch with their children or classroom parties. However, on such occasions, parents must still comply with other campus rules, such as reporting first to the campus office, showing identification, allowing a background check, obtaining a pass, and leaving campus upon request of a school administrator.

Principals and other school administrators have authority at all times to control access to school property by parents and other campus visitors. Principals and other school administrators may limit the access of parents and other campus visitors to school property, including limiting access to particular parts of a campus or prohibiting access altogether. During school hours, all parents must report to the office before going to any other part of the campus. This is an important security measure, and failure to respect this procedure may result in the parent being denied access to school property.

Requests by an independent evaluator to observe a special education student should be forwarded to the Special Education Department. The Director of Special Education and campus principal will determine the conditions for these observations.

## **PARENTAL RIGHTS**

See OBTAINING INFORMATION AND PROTECTING STUDENT RIGHTS.

## **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR STUDENTS IN ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE SCHOOL, AND HIGH SCHOOL**

In accordance with EHAB, EHAC, and FFA, the District will ensure that students in kindergarten through grade 5 engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day or 135 minutes per week. Students in grade 6 through 8 shall engage in 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day for at least four semesters OR at least 225 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity within a two-week period for at least four semesters. Students in a high school Physical Education course shall be actively engaged 50% of the time in moderate to vigorous physical activity. A parent's handwritten excuse from physical activity participation will be honored for a maximum of 2 days. A physician's medical excuse will be required for any ailment/injury requiring more than 2 days' exemption. If a child requires more than 2 days' exemption from physical activity, they will be assigned supplemental activities/assignments, as permitted. For additional information on the District's requirements and programs regarding elementary, junior high and high school student physical activity requirements, please see the campus principal.

### **Parental Access to Student Fitness Results**

Each year the Fitness gram Physical Assessment must be administered to all students in grades 3-12 that are in P.E. or classes that may be substituted for P.E. Parents may request a copy of their child's Fitness gram Physical Assessment by submitting a letter to the principal at the end of the school year.

## **PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE AND A MINUTE OF SILENCE**

Texas law requires students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag each school day. Parents may submit a written request to the principal to excuse their child from reciting pledge.

A minute of silence will follow recitation of the pledges. The student may choose to reflect, pray, meditate, or engage in any other silent activity so long as the silent activity does not interfere with or distract others. [See policy EC for more information]

## **PRAYER**

Each student has a right to individually, voluntarily, and silently pray or meditate in school in a manner that does not disrupt instructional or other activities of the school. The school will not require, encourage, or coerce a student to engage in or to refrain from such prayer or meditation during any school activity.

## **PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS**

Teachers and other District employees may discuss a student's academic progress or behavior with the student's parents or another employee as appropriate; however, they will not recommend use of psychotropic drugs. A District employee who is a registered nurse, an advanced nurse practitioner, a physician, or a certified or credentialed mental health professional can recommend that a student be evaluated by an appropriate medical practitioner, if appropriate. "Psychotropic drug" means a substance used in the diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of a disease or as a component of a medication and intended to have an altering effect on perception, emotion, or behavior. It is commonly described as a mood- or behavior-altering substance. [For further information, see policy FFAC]

## **RELEASE FROM SCHOOL**

Because class time is important, doctor's appointments should be scheduled, if possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time. Testing days are instructional days, and students will not be released early.

A student who will need to leave school during the day must bring a note from his or her parent that morning. A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent.

A student will not be released from school at times other than at the end of the school day except with permission from the principal or designee and according to the campus sign-out procedures. Testing days are instructional days, and students will not be released early, except as previously described.

Unless the principal has granted approval because of extenuating circumstances, a student will not regularly be released before the end of the instructional day.

Students are not permitted to leave their campus during regular school hours, unless they are accompanied by their parents, legal guardians or designee of record.

## **Withdrawing from School**

A student under 18 may be withdrawn from school only by a parent. The school requests notice from the parent at least three days in advance so that records and documents may be prepared.

On the student's last day, the withdrawal form must be presented to each teacher for current grade averages and book clearance; to the librarian to ensure a clear library record; to the clinic for health records; to the counselor for the last report card and course clearance; and finally, to the principal. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the student and a copy placed in the student's permanent record.

A student who is 18 or older, who is legally married, or who is an emancipated minor as declared by a court may withdraw without parental signature.

## **REPORT CARDS**

Written reports of absences and student grades or performance in each class or subject are issued to parents once every six weeks (elementary/ middle schools) and every nine weeks for high schools. At the end of the first three weeks of a grading period, parents are notified if the student's grade average is near or below 70, or below the expected level of performance. If a student receives a grade of less than 70 in any class or subject during a grading period, the parents are requested to schedule a conference with the teacher of that class or subject.

## **SAFETY**

### **Accident Prevention**

Student safety on campus and at school-related events is a high priority of the District. Although the District has implemented safety procedures, the cooperation of students is essential to ensure school safety. A student should:

- Avoid conduct that is likely to put the student or other students at risk.
- Follow the behavioral standards in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct, as well as any additional rules for behavior and safety set by the principal, teachers, or bus drivers.
- Remain alert to and promptly report to a teacher or the principal safety hazards, such as intruders on campus and threats made by any person toward a student or staff member.
- Know emergency evacuation routes and signals.
- Follow immediately the instructions of teachers, bus drivers, and other District employees who are overseeing the welfare of students.

### **Accident Insurance**

Soon after school opens, parents will have the opportunity to purchase low-cost accident insurance that will help meet medical expenses, in the event of injury to their child.

Except for the purchase of insurance against bodily injury sustained by students while training for or engaging in interscholastic athletic competition or while engaging in school-sponsored activities on a school campus, the District, under state law, cannot pay for medical expenses associated with a student's injury.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS**

Many national and local scholarships are available to students. Information on such scholarships is available to students and parents via the school websites along with scholarship flyers posted throughout the school. Applications for scholarships may be picked up in the College and Career Center. A few scholarships require online submission. Opportunities to file Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are also provided several times within the Spring Semester. For further information, please call the guidance office. The counselors can provide additional information about meeting the program's eligibility requirements. Students who have a financial need according to federal criteria and who complete certain Graduation Plans may be eligible under the TEXAS Grant Program for tuition and fees to Texas public universities, community colleges, and technical schools, as well as to private institutions. [For further information, see the principal or counselor and policy E.J]

## **SCHOOL HEALTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

During the preceding school year, the District's School Health Advisory Council held several meetings. Additional information regarding the District's School Health Education Advisory Council is available on the District website. [See also policies BDF and EHAA].

## **SEARCHES**

In the interest of promoting student safety and attempting to ensure that schools are safe and drug free, District officials may from time to time conduct searches. Such searches are conducted without a warrant and as permitted by law. Students have full responsibility for the security of their lockers, and for vehicles parked on school property. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that lockers and vehicles are locked and that the keys and combinations are not given to others. Students shall not place, keep, or maintain any article or material that is forbidden by District policy in lockers or in vehicles parked on school property. [For further information, see policy FNF]

### **Student Lockers**

School lockers, including lockers in dressing areas, are the property of the District. At no time does the District relinquish its exclusive control of lockers provided for the convenience of students. School authorities for any reason may conduct inspections of lockers at any

time, without notice, without student consent, and without a search warrant. Students shall be responsible for any prohibited items found in their locker. Students must be certain that the locker is locked, and that the combination is not available to others. The parent will be notified if any prohibited items are found in the student's desk or locker. See also the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Vehicles on Campus**

Vehicles parked on school property are under the jurisdiction of the school. School officials may search any vehicle any time there is reasonable cause to do so, with or without the presence of the student. A student has full responsibility for the security and content of his or her vehicle and must make certain that it is locked and that the keys are not given to others. See also the Student Code of Conduct.

### **Trained Dogs**

The District shall use specially trained non-aggressive dogs to sniff out and alert to the current presence of concealed prohibited items, illicit substances defined in Board policy FNCF, and alcohol. Visits by trained dogs to the schools will not be announced. Trained dogs will be used to conduct random searches in vacant rooms, vacant common areas, around student lockers, and around vehicles parked on school property. If contraband of any kind is found, the student shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and will be referred to legal authorities for possible criminal prosecution.

### **SEXTING**

Sexting is defined as taking, sending, or forwarding obscene, sexually oriented or sexually explicit nude or partially nude images of oneself or others, or sending or forwarding texts that are obscene, sexually oriented or sexually explicit. In some instances, such acts have been classified as illegal, (i.e. child pornography).

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT / SEXUAL ABUSE**

Students must not engage in unwanted and unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward another student or a District employee. This prohibition applies whether the conduct is by word, gesture, or any other sexual conduct, including requests for sexual favors. All students are expected to treat other students and District employees with courtesy and respect, to avoid any behaviors known to be offensive, and to stop these behaviors when asked or told to stop. The District will notify the parents of all students involved in sexual harassment by students when the allegations are not minor, and will notify parents of any incident of sexual harassment or sexual abuse by an employee. To the greatest extent possible, complaints will be treated as confidential. Limited disclosure may be necessary to complete a thorough investigation. A complaint alleging sexual harassment by another student or sexual harassment or sexual abuse by a staff member may be presented by a student and/or parent in a conference with the principal or designee or with the Title IX coordinator Margot Torres, Executive Director of Human Resources (956)361-6100.

### **SOCIAL EVENTS**

School rules apply to school social events to which a student brings a guest. Guests are expected to observe the same rules as students attending the event, and the person inviting the guest will share responsibility for the conduct of the guest.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

The District provides special programs for gifted and talented students, homeless students, bilingual students, and migrant students, students with limited English proficiency, dyslexic students, and students with disabilities. The coordinator of each program can answer questions about eligibility requirements, as well as programs and services offered in the District or by other organizations. A student or parent with questions about these programs should contact the SBCISD Academic Services Department.

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic or behavior support services that are available to all students including a process based on Response to Intervention (RtI). The implementation of RtI has the potential to have a positive impact on the ability of districts to meet the needs of all struggling students.

At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If the evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide informed written consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 45 school days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the evaluation report to the parent.

If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with prior written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parents of their rights, if they disagree with the district. The district is required to give parents the Notice of Procedural Safeguards – Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities. Additional information regarding the IDEA is available from the school district in a companion document A Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process.

The following websites provide information to those who are seeking information and resources specific to students with disabilities and their families:

- [Texas Project First](http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/) <http://www.texasprojectfirst.org/>
- [Partners Resource Network](http://www.partnerstx.org/howPRNhelps.html) <http://www.partnerstx.org/howPRNhelps.html>

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education services is: Theresa Cantu, Director of Special Education Services/Section 504/Dyslexia/RTI Coordinator at (956)-361-6100.

### **Notice of Updated Criteria for a Related Service under IDEA 2004**

The components of a related service as outlined by IDEA 2004 include: 1) Purpose (34CFR§300.1(a); 2) Continuum of Alternative Placements (34CFR§300.551(a); 3) Placements (34CFR§300.552(b) (2)). San Benito CISD adheres to the principle that a related service is defined as developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from the student's special education services (U.S.C. §1401). Upon a referral for an evaluation for a related service eligibility (e.g., special education counseling), the student is tested. If eligible, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with measurable goals and objectives is developed based on the findings of the evaluation. The Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committee reviews the IEP and recommends the appropriate setting/service provider for implementation of the IEP goals. Diligence will be given in determining the outcome of the aforementioned system, following the child-centered process, and ensuring that each identified student receive related service recommendations that are individualized and appropriate for that student.

### **Response to Intervention (RtI)**

In an effort to meet the needs of struggling students as early as possible, the San Benito CISD uses an early intervention process, referred to as Response to Intervention. Response to Intervention is designed as a school-wide, multi-tiered approach to providing quality instruction to meet the individual needs of all students. RtI holds the promise of ensuring that all children have access to high quality instruction, and that struggling learners, including those with behavioral challenges, are identified, supported and served early and effectively.

RtI involves the use of "data-based decision making" to effectively address instruction and implement scientifically-based interventions. Students are able to move in and out of the individual tiers based on how well they respond to intervention. Within an RtI framework, instruction is determined by the needs of the students in the classroom. Data is collected at each tier by a campus RtI core team to determine the efficacy and fidelity of instruction and intervention, to address the individual academic and/or behavioral needs of the student, and to develop appropriate instruction and interventions to address these needs. Should regular education, together with these early intervention efforts be insufficient to meet the needs of the struggling student, or there are grounds to suspect that the student has a physical or mental impairment, the District should consider seeking parental consent for an evaluation under Section 504 or Special Education (IDEA), as appropriate to the student.

At any time during the RtI process, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for consideration of special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If the evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide informed written consent for the initial evaluation. If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district must provide the parent with prior written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated including a copy of their procedural safeguards under the IDEA.



## Section 504

Students who have a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more of life's major activities (including but not limited to learning, behavior, reading, etc.) and which requires some accommodations but is not severe enough to require Special Education services may be eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Section 504 protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal funds. Section 504 provides that: *"No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States... shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance..."* [34 C.F.R. §104.4(a)] Section 504 provides eligible students with equal opportunity when compared to their same age, non-disabled peers and based on their individual needs due to disability. A medical diagnosis alone is not sufficient evidence to qualify a student for services under Section 504.

San Benito CISD provides a "free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each qualified and eligible person with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the person's disability."

## Dyslexia

Students who continue to struggle to read, despite appropriate or intensified instruction, are provided organized systems of reading support in the state of Texas. In Texas, the identification and instruction of students with dyslexia and related disorders are mandated and structured by the Texas Education Code at §38.003(1) and the Texas Administrative Code §74.28. Guidelines for implementing the state dyslexia law are outlined in TEA's *The Dyslexia Handbook – revised 2014: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders*. San Benito CISD serves identified and eligible students with appropriate classroom accommodations and/or placement in the District's dyslexia program.

For additional information, contact Theresa Cantu, Director of Special Education Services/Section 504/Dyslexia/RTI Coordinator at (956)-361-6100.

## **STATE-MANDATED ASSESSMENT TESTS**

Students at certain grade levels will take state assessment tests in the following subjects, as well as routine testing and other measures of annually in grades 3–8; and EOC Algebra I;

- Reading, annually in grades 3–8;
- Writing, including spelling and grammar in grades 4 and 7;
- English language arts: EOC English I and II (Reading and Writing);
- Social studies in grades 8; and EOC U.S. History;
- Science in grades 5 and 8; and EOC Biology;
- Any other subject and grade required by federal law.

**NOTE:** [See policy EKB]

## **STEROIDS**

Parents and students should be aware that state law prohibits students from possessing, dispensing, delivering, or administering an anabolic steroid. Anabolic steroids are for medical use only, and only a physician can prescribe use. Under state law, body building, muscle enhancement, or the increase of muscle bulk or strength through the use of an anabolic steroid or human growth hormone by a healthy student is not a valid medical use and is a criminal offense.

## **STUDENT RECORDS (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act)**

Both federal and state law safeguard student records from unauthorized inspection or use and provide parents and "eligible" students certain rights. For purposes of student records, an "eligible" student is one who is 18 or older OR who is attending an institution of postsecondary education.

The law specifies that certain general information about San Benito Consolidated Independent School District students is considered "directory information" and will be released to anyone who follows procedures for requesting it. That information includes:

- A student's name, address, telephone number, and date and place of birth.
- The student's photograph, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, and weight and height of members of athletic teams.
- The student's dates of attendance, grade level, enrollment status, honors and awards received in school, and most recent school previously attended.
- The student's e-mail address.

A parent or an eligible student may prevent the release of any or all directory information regarding a student. This objection must be made in writing to the principal within ten school days of the child's first day of this school year.

Virtually all information pertaining to student performance, including grades, test results, and disciplinary records, is considered confidential educational records. Release is restricted to:

- The parents—whether married, separated, or divorced—unless parental rights have been legally terminated and if the school is given a copy of the court order terminating these rights. Federal law requires that, as soon as the student becomes 18 or is emancipated by a court, control of the records goes to the student. However, the parents may continue to have access to the records, if the student is a dependent, for tax purposes.
- District staff members who have what federal law defines as a "legitimate educational interest" in a student's records. Such persons would include school officials (such as Board members, the Superintendent, and principals), school staff members (such as teachers, counselors, and diagnosticians), or an agent of the District (such as a medical consultant).
- Various governmental agencies or in response to a subpoena or court order.

- A school to which a student transfers or in which he or she subsequently enrolls.

Release to any other person or agency—such as a prospective employer, or for a scholarship application—will occur only with parental or student permission as appropriate. The District must comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for students' names, addresses, and telephone listings, unless parents have advised the District not to release their child's information without prior written consent.

The principal is the custodian of all records for currently enrolled students at the assigned school.

A parent or eligible student may inspect records during regular school hours. If circumstances prevent inspection during these hours, the District will either provide a copy of the requested records, or make other arrangements for the parent or student to review the requested records. The records custodian or designee will respond to reasonable requests for explanation and interpretation of the records. A parent (or the student if he or she is 18 or older or is attending an institution of postsecondary education) may inspect the student's records and request a correction if the records are considered inaccurate or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights. If the District refuses the request to amend the records, the requestor has the right to request a hearing. If the records are not amended as a result of the hearing, the requestor has 30 school days to exercise the right to place a statement commenting on the information in the student's record. Although improperly recorded grades may be challenged, contesting a student's grade in a course is handled through the general complaint process defined by policy FNG.

Copies of student records are available at a cost of fifty cents per page, payable in advance. If the student qualifies for free or reduced-price lunches and the parents are unable to view the records during regular school hours, one copy of the record will be provided at no charge upon written request of the parent.

**Please note:** Parents or eligible students have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education if they believe the District is not in compliance with federal law regarding student records. The District's policy regarding student records is available from the principal's or Superintendent's office. The parent's or eligible student's right of access to, and copies of, student records does not extend to all records. Materials that are not considered educational records—such as teachers' personal notes about a student that are shared only with a substitute teacher—do not have to be made available to the parents or student.

### **SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM**

Counselors and teachers will use the SUPER PAC procedures with SBCISD students considering suicide or expressing suicidal.

### **TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS:**

You may request the following information, which we will provide to you in a timely manner:

1. Whether your child's teacher(s) have met state qualification and licensing criteria for their grade levels and subject areas.
2. Whether your child's teacher(s) are serving under emergency or other provisional status that is less than full state certification.
3. The bachelor's degree major of your child's teacher(s) and any graduate degrees held, and the field of certification or degree.
4. Whether your child receives services from paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

### **TEXTBOOKS**

State-approved textbooks are provided free of charge for each subject or class. Books must be covered by the student, as directed by the teacher, and treated with care. A student who is issued a damaged book should report the damage to the teacher. Any student failing to return a book issued by the school loses the right to free textbooks until the book is returned or paid for by the parent. However, a student will be provided textbooks for use at school during the school day. [For further information, see policy CMD]

### **TOBACCO PROHIBITED**

The District and its staff strictly enforce prohibitions against the use of tobacco products by students and others on school property or at school-sponsored or school-related activities. [See the Student Code of Conduct Handbook and policies FNCD and GKA]

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **School-Sponsored**

Students who participate in school-sponsored trips are required to use transportation provided by the school to and from the event. The principal, however, may make an exception if the parent makes a written request that the student be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent.

#### **School Buses and Other School Vehicles**

The District makes school bus transportation available to all students living two or more miles from school. This service is provided at no cost to students. Bus routes and any subsequent changes are posted at the school. Further information may be obtained by calling the Transportation Department at (956) 361-6310 or the individual campus office. See the Student Code of Conduct for provisions regarding transportation to the disciplinary Alternative Education Program.

Students are expected to assist District staff in ensuring that buses remain in good condition and that transportation is provided safely. When riding in District vehicles, students are held to behavioral standards established in this handbook and the Student Code of Conduct. Students must:

- Follow the driver's directions at all times.
- Enter and leave the bus or van in an orderly manner at the designated stop nearest home.
- Keep feet, books, band instrument cases, and other objects out of the aisle.
- Not deface the bus or van or its equipment.
- Not put head, hands, arms, or legs out of the window, hold any object out of the window, or throw objects within or out of the bus.
- Be seated while the vehicle is moving.
- Wait for the driver's signal upon leaving the bus before crossing in front of the vehicle.

When students ride in a District van or passenger car, seat belts must be fastened at all times.

Misconduct will be punished in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct; bus-riding privileges may be suspended.

## **TRUANCY**

See Attendance/Compulsory Attendance

## **VENDING MACHINES**

The District has adopted policies and implemented procedures to comply with state and federal food service guidelines for restricting student access to vending machines. For more information regarding these policies and guidelines see the Director for Child Nutrition Program.

*The San Benito Consolidated Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education or providing access to benefits of education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.*

